

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claim 7.

1. (Original) Process for the preparation of 2-phenylbenzimidazole-5-sulphonic acid, comprising reacting 3,4-diaminobenzenesulphonic acid at a pH between 4 and 7 in aqueous solution with 0.9 to 1.5 mol of benzaldehyde per mole of 3,4-diaminobenzenesulphonic acid and with 1.0 to 3.0 mol of SO₂ per mole of 3,4-diaminobenzenesulphonic acid, or an agent which comprises 1.0 to 3.0 mol of SO₂ per mole of 3,4-diaminobenzenesulphonic acid.
2. (Original) Process according to Claim 1, characterized in that 3,4-diaminobenzenesulphonic acid obtained by sulphonation of 1,2-diaminobenzene is used.
3. (Original) Process according to Claim 1, characterized in that the reaction is carried out at a pH in the range from 5 to 7.
4. (Original) Process according to Claim 1, characterized in that the benzaldehyde is used in an amount of from 1.05 to 1.1 mol/mol.
5. (Original) Process according to Claim 1, characterized in that the reaction is carried out at a temperature in the range from 25° to 130°C.
6. (Original) 2-phenylbenzimidazole-5-sulphonic acid obtained according to Claim 1 is lightened by means of treatment with an oxidizing agent.
7. (Cancelled)

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